

and to narrow its extent as Macaulay does
obscures its
significance.

Macaulay's account of the War of the Grand
Alliance is
defective in another way. It is evident that his
knowledge
of European history was somewhat superficial,
and hence
his representation of William's position and
William's
policy is open to a good deal of criticism.
When the third
and fourth volumes of the History appeared its
shortcomings
in this respect were pointed out by J. M.
Kemble in an
article which is still worth reading.¹

After praising Macaulay's account of
English affairs
given in the History, the critic observes :

We feel anxious to call attention to the
large field of
action which he leaves well-nigh untouched.
We mean, of
course, the foreign policy of William. Mr.
Macaulay tells
us more than once that the King was his own
Foreign Sec-
retary : he justifies this, not only upon the
acquiescence of
the wisest politicians of the time, but upon
grounds which
are in themselves amply sufficient. Now, if
William's true
greatness lay in the manner in which he
framed and upheld
the coalition against Lewis ; if this was pre-
eminently his
own work, one in which a share of honour
could not be
claimed by any Englishman; has not Mr.
Macaulay done
injustice to his hero in letting us know so little
of the difficulties
which were to be overcome, and the
means by which
success was attained? Must we not naturally
be anxious to
know what obstacles were to be removed, what

conflicting
interests reconciled, by the man who took upon
himself to
consolidate and wield so vast a power? Here,
however,
Mr. Macaulay leaves us nearly in the dark,
contenting him-
self with a few sentences here and there, of a
very indefinite

¹ Published in Fraser's Magazine for Feb. 1856, pp. 147-
66. Kemble's
State Papers and Correspondence Illustrative of the
Social and Political
State of Europe from the Revolution to the Accession of
the House of
Hanover (1857) contains 250 pages of documents
relating to the period
dealt with by Macaulay.